

# **Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Conservation Strategy (CS) Workgroup Meeting**

March 26, 2007, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Resources Agency Bldg., Room 1131

## **Draft Meeting Notes**

**Co-chairs:** Anthony Saracino, Walt Wadlow (absent)

### **Associated documents/handouts:**

- Agenda
- Handout #1: Conservation Themes and Stressors for Pelagic Fish (Draft Working Table)
- Handout #2: Conservation Themes and Stressors for Salmonids (Draft Working Table)

### **Action Items and Key Recommendations**

- Workgroup agreed to begin crafting draft Conservation Objectives to be used in creating and short-listing Conservation Strategy Alternatives, and directed SAIC to develop draft Conservation Objectives
- SAIC will incorporate feedback from today's meeting into Conservation Themes and Stressors tables (Handouts #1 and #2)
- SAIC will summarize information presented in the conservation theme stressor tables in various formats (e.g., listing conservation measure concepts by stressor) for presentation at future meetings

### **Developing Draft Conservation Objectives**

A. Saracino re-introduced the discussion from 3/19 regarding Conservation Objectives and Biological Goals and Objectives. To date BDCP has not developed any measurable objectives. Development of measurable objectives will be needed to develop the Conservation Strategy.

Laura Simonek, Ara Azhderian, Ann Hayden, and A. Saracino met to discuss development of measurable objectives. Biological Goals and Objectives are legal terms of art found in the USFWS and NMFS 5-Point Policy for HCP's. They suggest developing a set of broad draft Conservation Objectives (CO's) for BDCP based on the Conservation Themes and Stressors already created. Draft CO's would be non-binding framework used to develop and short-list Conservation Strategy Alternatives. Biological Goals and Objectives would be developed at a later stage in BDCP.

Discussion followed about the process of developing CO's, particularly how species-level stressors will be integrated, the role of science in developing CO's, how they will relate to Biological Goals and Objectives (NCCP/HCP), and how they will be used in developing CSA's and criteria for short-listing the CSA's.

The Workgroup agreed that broad measurable objectives would be useful at this stage, and agreed to move in that direction. Specifically, they directed SAIC to develop a set of draft CO's based on the current Conservation Themes and stressors.

### **Presentation of Draft Conservation Themes and Stressors handouts (SAIC)**

The Workgroup reviewed and provided comment to the stressors, impact mechanisms, and conservation measure concepts listed under Conservation Theme 6 of the pelagic fish table (Handout #1: information listed for the other themes were reviewed at the 3/19 meeting) and under all Conservation Themes in the salmonid table (Handout #2). Information in these handouts were developed by technical experts in working sessions held on 3/16 and 3/21. Changes to the table format and content since the 3/19 meeting include:

- Monitoring mortality added as a stressor
- Participants of technical sessions listed in handouts
- Summary of guidance provided to technical experts included in handouts
- Many more stressors added for the salmonids than were identified for pelagic fish because of their wider habitat requirements (i.e., upstream of Delta)

Upcoming technical sessions will be held 3/28 and 4/4 to identify stressors, impact mechanisms, and conservation measure concepts for Sacramento splittail and green and white sturgeon, respectively.

The tables are still being updated and annotated, and include conservation measure concepts that may harm some species while benefiting others. The level of importance of or uncertainties associated with stressors and conservation measure concepts presented in the tables have not been evaluated. This evaluation will occur after Short-listing Criteria and Conservation Objectives are developed. Current regulatory and operating conditions are also not considered. Some stressors are more detailed than others where more information is currently available; more detail will be added as it becomes available (e.g. DRERIP models will be available in June). The tables currently include a number of redundancies and inconsistencies (e.g., terms) among and within each of the Conservation Themes. These redundancies and inconsistencies will be addressed once information for all of the remaining species has been developed.

The role of independent science was discussed, specifically how CALFED's ISB may be able to help BDCP, and how members can learn more about the concept of fluctuating Delta salinities.. It was suggested that historical documents and data be reviewed as part of BDCP to better understand this issue.

Chuck Hanson from the SAIC team asked the Workgroup to consider several points:

- 1) The estuary has been affected by nonnative species. They have been identified as stressors and possible conservation measures are currently included in the tables. Does the Workgroup want that to be included?
- 2) Should we discuss monitoring needs and how they would be used?

3) BDCP is a long-range conservation plan, so it needs to address anticipated future conditions such as sea level rise and Delta levee failures as they relate to achieving BDCP conservation objectives in the long-term.

Clarifications and feedback on Handout #1 (Pelagic Fish):

- 6-1: “Point source nutrient loading” is an unconventional action that could be taken at specific points (e.g., certain stages of wastewater treatment, agricultural water return flows) to benefit Delta species.

Clarification and feedback on Handout #2 (Salmonid Fish)

- Tables include all three runs of Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead. Chinook salmon distribution and biological needs are much better understood than steelhead, however, so the tables reflect that in greater detail on stressors for Chinook.
- 1-1b: It may be appropriate to include reduced exports as a conservation measure concept here since it is included in other cells
- 1-4b and 1-4c: “DWR bypasses” will be changed to “Central Valley flood control bypass system” to reflect passive nature of operations
- 1-10: should include channel depth as well as width
- 2-3: There is uncertainty with respect to rearing habitat in different parts of the Delta and upstream, and uncertainty about the degree of impacts to populations from entrainment, relative survivorship
- “levee failure” and “island flooding” are the same stressor, need the wording reconciled
- 2-5: dredging for non-lethal toxics may be appropriate under certain circumstances, but might cause resuspension of particles so is not always appropriate

## **Meeting Schedule**

Same time and location on the following dates:

- 4/2: Presentation on fluctuating Delta by Peter Moyle and Chuck Hanson  
Presentation of draft Conservation Objectives by SAIC
- 4/9: Winnowing CSA’s  
Short-listing Criteria
- 4/16: Short-listing Criteria  
Recommendations to Steering Committee
- 4/23: Short-listing process
- 4/30: In-progress, short-listing
- 5/7: Present results to Steering Committee